





# Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits



JAN 14 1992

The Spiritual Exercises  
in Everyday Life:  
A Practical Implementation

*L. Patrick Carroll, S.J.*

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# THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

A group of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

The Seminar studies topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces. This is done in the spirit of Vatican II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material which it publishes.

The Seminar focuses its direct attention on the life and work of the Jesuits of the United States. The issues treated may be common also to Jesuits of other regions, to other priests, religious, laity, men and/or women. Hence the Studies, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

## CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE SEMINAR

- L. Patrick Carroll, S.J., is pastor of St. Leo's Parish in Tacoma, Washington, and superior of the Jesuit community there.
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L. Patrick Carroll, S.J.

Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits  
22/1: January 1990





### *For your information . . .*

You, the readers of *Studies*, have in your hands the issue promised in the last number of 1989, with "some changes . . . as it begins a new year which is also the beginning of the period 1990-1991, in which we commemorate the 450th anniversary of the foundation of the Society (1540) and the 500th (1491) of the birth of Saint Ignatius."

*Studies* and the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality, which is the source of this publication, have not changed their goals. On the inside front cover of this issue you can read the same statement of those goals which has appeared in earlier issues. But we have changed the typeface in which our articles are printed in order to make them more easily readable, and we have changed the cover design in order to make it, we hope, more attractive.

Of greater importance is a feature added to this issue and to be regularly a part of *Studies* for these two anniversary years, 1990-1991. During that time each issue will contain a translation of a single, brief document from the early history of the Society, approximately from 1540 to 1600. You will find, along with further information, the first of those documents, by Jerome Nadal, immediately after the article by Patrick Carroll, "The Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life: A Practical Implementation."

A copy of the new book written by Joseph Tetlow and designed by Thomas Rochford, *Choosing Christ in the World: A Handbook on Directing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola according to Annotations Eighteen and Nineteen*, is now in the hands of every American Jesuit. They received the book as an "anniversaries year" gift from the Fathers Provincial of the Society of Jesus in the United States. It is meant to further the directing of the Spiritual Exercises in the context of daily life. While that book was being written, Patrick Carroll was independently at work on our present issue of *Studies*. It comes from many years of experience in directing such retreats in daily life and from his presentation and the further discussion of the topic at meetings of the Seminar. The article will simply in itself be of great use to our readers. But if those readers who do not have a copy of Father Tetlow's book would like to obtain one as a complement to our

present article, they will find further information on about it in a notice at the end of this issue, immediately after the list of back numbers of *Studies*.

Obviously *Studies*, even in five issues a year, cannot cover the range of topics on Jesuit spirituality. So, every once in a while this column will call to your attention an article, a book, a journal that may be of interest and importance in the area of Jesuit spirituality. Among such topics of current importance you may find very informative and interesting a forty-four page booklet on Jesuit spirituality as a stimulus to ecumenical involvement. Entitled "Always Growing in Devotion . . ." (a phrase from St. Ignatius), it is the text of the "Chancellor's Lecture" given at the Jesuit school of theology in Toronto, Regis College, by Michael J. Buckley, S.J., formerly a teacher at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley and executive director of the committee on doctrine of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and now a member of the faculty at the University of Notre Dame. You can obtain the booklet, prepaid, for \$3.00 (including postage) U.S. currency, from the President's office, Regis College, 15 St. Mary Street, Toronto M4Y 2R5, Canada.

Lastly, some news about our next issue. Written by Joseph Bracken, S.J. of Xavier University in Cincinnati, it is entitled "Process Theology and Jesuit Spirituality." The article will stimulate the reader's mind and imagination.

*John W. Padberg, S.J.*  
*Editor*



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# The Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life

## *A Practical Implementation*

### PERSONAL PREFACE

The essay that follows admittedly departs from anything previously published in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*. Scholarly, even highly personal issues abound that have helped me and countless others to theorize about various aspects of our spiritual, Jesuit, Christian lives. This present work, though not without some theoretical base, deals most explicitly with *praxis*. I offer this divergence from the norm of *Studies* for two cogent reasons.

First, to the extent that I am a theologian at all, I am a pastoral theologian. For twenty-five years my concerns with pastoral ministry have been, not what sounds good or makes head sense or even what authentically articulates the Gospel of Jesus, but rather what "works" out in the marketplace of individual lives. Rather than sharing a theory about the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius according to Annotation 19, I offer a program that has worked, abundantly, in the lives of over three hundred people in the past six years.

Secondly, as I mention in the essay itself, I have the belief and the hope that the Spiritual Exercises can and do offer a central, almost-unrealized way for Jesuits to bring to the larger Church what is best and most essential in our unique lives. Many more of us than presently do so could be giving the gift freely to others. We can do this while engaged in any imaginable ministry.

I am not a professional retreat director, nor an authority on ascetical theology. I am a pastor. I have been a rector, a president, a teacher. Whatever central ministry I have been engaged in has been

invaluably enriched by my desire and sometimes my ability to inform that ministry with the Spiritual Exercises. Excitedly I offer to Jesuits (and other Christians) a program that has worked, hoping that others can experience a deeply satisfying joy similar to mine as a grateful son of Ignatius.

## INTRODUCTION

A person of education or ability who is taken up with public affairs or suitable business may take an hour and one half daily to exercise himself [or herself]. . . .

Nineteenth Annotation, *The Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius

Between September 1988 and Pentecost 1989, sixty-three people in the Seattle-Tacoma area made the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in their entirety according to Annotation 19. This group of lay Christians, predominantly Roman Catholic, but generously interspersed with other Christian traditions, each enjoyed the individual spiritual direction of one of twenty-seven directors. These directors also were for the most part lay persons, along with five Jesuits, three women religious, and two ministers from other Christian denominations. These retreatants constituted the sixth such group to experience the full Exercises in this area.

This essay will describe the program of which these retreatants were a part, from its inception to its present reality. Through this description I hope to inform, but still more to inspire, other Jesuits, assisted by a variety of collaborators, to explore the possibility of duplicating this experience in some form within the context of whatever other ministries are theirs.

I recognize the difficulty of giving too much information to inspire, or perhaps too much inspiration to truly inform; nevertheless, I will endeavor to do both at once.

Personally, my involvement with this program has been the single most fulfilling aspect of my ministry as a Jesuit. While being



rewarding, it has also stretched me and my fellow Jesuits in ways we could not have imagined. We have been challenged to realize and savor a treasure we scarcely knew we had, as we entrust who we are at the core of our being to the hands and hearts and prayers of wondrous people, the non-Jesuits with whom we share this treasure—"share," not as if they were recipients of a gift from us, but rather they too, together with us Jesuits, are now the owners and givers of the gift to others. I have come to more deeply receive the gift of the Exercises by seeing them through the eyes of others.

We are invited, as Jesuits, to develop the "Faith that does Justice." I have discovered no better way to help with the development of an individual's faith than to provide the opportunity to experience and deepen the personal prayer that must underlie continuous, hope-filled action on behalf of justice. I know no better way than this to support those with whom my life has become intertwined, who have been on the front lines of action on behalf of the poor.

In the pages that follow, I reflect on this nineteenth annotation as one of many ways to adapt the Exercises. I describe how this specific program began. Coming to the central theme of this essay, I then detail the program in its present incarnation, a form that I believe any Jesuit could imitate. Finally, for the sake of honesty, I discuss some aspects of the program still in process, questions still unsolved, perhaps insoluble.

## I. ADAPTING THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

In their original form and utilization the Spiritual Exercises were a school of prayer for someone entering into a serious pursuit of the spiritual life. Though a variety of educational or ascetical experiences may have preceded someone's actual entering into the Exercises, the retreat was primarily part of the initial formation of a Christian's (most often, a Jesuit's or a potential Jesuit's) life. These exercises aimed at



creating the ability to "conquer oneself and regulate one's life without determining oneself through any tendency that is disordered."

The nineteenth annotation is really only one of many ways that Jesuits and others have, over the past four hundred and fifty years, adapted this original usage of the Exercises. In fact, almost everything we do and speak of as "The Exercises" would more accurately be called an adaptation of them. Certainly the annual eight- or six-day retreat, the weekend men's retreat, even the thirty-day tertianship retreat at the end of one's formation period extend what is actually only the *introduction* into the freedom of the followers of Christ Jesus that is the intended fruit of the Exercises.

The nineteenth annotation of the text presumably intended to offer the complete Exercises to someone relatively new to a serious pursuit of the spiritual life, someone who was searching for the freedom to truly determine a direction for his or her life.

As it is offered today, this nineteenth-annotation retreat necessarily adapts to the prayer life already developed in a committed Christian's life as he or she seeks to go more deeply into the mystery of Jesus and experience the freedom of God's children. Unless it is enormously adapted, the nineteenth-annotation retreat would not be particularly adequate to a Jesuit—especially as years go on.

For someone living a Christian life, the Exercises are not *the* way to achieve the fullness of Christian life. Ignatian prayer is not *the best* way to pray, only a favored way. Any follower of Jesus aims, not at living "The Exercises," but at living out the Gospel. The Spiritual Exercises, then, offer *an* excellent way to enter into prayer, to wrestle with the central Christian truths, to honestly face oneself, to deepen a relationship with Jesus and his God. The Exercises are *one* excellent packaging of the Christian mystery in a way that can be not just intellectually known but actually experienced.

Every year the Christian Church takes us on a liturgical cycle that replicates again the heart of our faith. Each year, over and over, Christ is born, lives, dies, is raised again; and the Church experiences its own rebirth in the Spirit of that Jesus. The prayer experience of the Spiritual Exercises mirrors the prayer experience of Christian life, the liturgical cycle. Thus, one can make the Exercises adapted to his or her

personal life situation over and over again, in different forms, for different periods of time. Each experience will be different; some will be profoundly moving, some very dry, as is true of each liturgical calendar year.

The Spiritual Exercises, then, most certainly offer *a* way to meet Jesus Christ, *a* way to pray, *a* way to deepen Christian life. Each individual pray-er will experience this uniquely. Each director will nuance the direction personally. Though there are particular structural exercises (the Principle and Foundation, the Kingdom, the Two Standards, the Contemplatio, and the Three Degrees of Humility), particular emphasis on repetition or use of the imagination, or the application of the senses, or examination of consciousness—all peculiar to the Spiritual Exercises—the retreat will be adapted to each person, and each will experience his or her unique retreat.

## II. BEGINNING THE PROGRAM

### Personal Biography

To describe how the Seattle-Tacoma Program for "The Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life" evolved demands some personal biography. I was ordained in 1967. Since that time I have held a variety of jobs: assistant to the novice master in 1968-69, associate pastor in Seattle, 1969-70, rector-president for two years at Bellarmine Prep in Tacoma, then only rector and teacher for five years more. In each of these positions, I was involved marginally but by conscious decision in some spiritual direction, some weekend or summer retreat work. I never studied ascetical theology, never took a course in the Exercises, nor did an internship in spiritual direction. I learned what little I know by the seat of my pants, through reading, experience, and many, many wonderful conversations with Jesuits and others more informed, more skilled than I. What I want to insist on for the purpose of this essay is that I am not trained as a specialist either in the Exercises or in spiritual direction.

It is precisely this lack of professional training that provides the basis for the theory on which we have operated. I have learned spiritual direction and the Spiritual Exercises more by doing than by studying. The study has come personally out of the need to know more. I am convinced that I have indeed become a professional by practice. And I am equally convinced that others are able to learn through the process. Immersion into the experience of directing the Exercises with some preparation and some supervision has led the wonderful lay people with whom we work to do the study necessary to develop the essential interpersonal skills to become experts themselves.

In 1977 I had the wonderful opportunity to go with Holy Names Sister Katherine Dyckman to Lesotho, a small black nation within the borders of the Republic of South Africa. There we worked for eight months under the direction of the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious, giving individually directed eight-day retreats to priests, sisters, even bishops of that small, heavily Catholic country. We then invited ten of the best people we had met during the previous eight months to spend our final month together so that we could prepare them to be retreat directors. We ended our time in Lesotho with a large retreat in which each of those ten new directors walked through an eight-day retreat with two retreatants under the supervision of Katherine and me.

I can imagine no more fruitful missionary experience than both to do something worthwhile and also to have the opportunity to set up a continuing program that has sustained itself ever since.

Personally, this submersion into spirituality profoundly affected my future work. Since returning to the Oregon Province, though I have held two positions as full-time pastor in parishes, first in Seattle, now in Tacoma, I have made this work of giving spiritual direction and the Exercises an enduring, primary avocation.

In 1978 Sr. Katherine and I established "Resources for Spiritual Leadership" in the Archdiocese of Seattle. She worked full-time; I joined her when possible. We initially aimed at offering training programs for spiritual directors, basing our work on the strong presumption that every parish, every community, every movement had



within itself those who were natural companions to others in their spiritual quest. Our premise was realized as parishes, cursillo groups, Marriage Encounter groups, charismatic-renewal communities, L'Arche communities, and various other Christian denominations all sent wonderfully gifted people, essentially to be better trained for what they were already doing, being spiritual companions within the communities of which they were a part. In addition to workshops around this area and across Canada, and summer schools in the ministry-training programs at Seattle University, we offered some training in spiritual direction to over four hundred people in our archdiocese.

In 1982, in Calgary, Alberta, where we were doing a workshop, we met two Canadian Jesuits, Joe McArdle and Bob Chase. They had developed a program in the nineteenth-annotation retreat which they had used in several cities across Canada. Their approach had been to come into an area to offer the full Spiritual Exercises according to this annotation, and then in successive years to train the participants to be spiritual directors for others. They had not yet focused on training retreat directors as such.

Our conversations led Katherine and me to wonder, What if we took our best spiritual directors, already somewhat formed, already ministering, offered them a year of individually directed retreat, then invited them to be retreat directors? We suspected that we could establish a team of directors available to between sixty and one hundred people a year.

Thus, out of a sort of biographically integral progression, our retreat program was born.

### **The Initial Experience**

In the summer of 1983, Sr. Katherine Dyckman and I invited two other Jesuits, another Sister of the Holy Names, and a Providence Sister, all experienced directors, to join us in this undertaking. Selecting sixty of the best spiritual directors we know, all laymen and laywomen except three ministers from other Christian denominations, we invited them to make the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius accord-

ing to Annotation 19, and to consider further committing themselves for at least one year thereafter to serve as directors of others in the same experience. Thirty-three people agreed. Each of the six core staff directed five or six people that year.

I will describe later how our format evolved; but initially we asked people to agree to three things: one hour of prayer a day for the nine months of retreat (most were doing that already); one hour or so with a director every two weeks; two hours spent together on one Saturday morning a month, devoted to faith sharing and some input, intended to provide a sense of doing this retreat within the context of a community of believers.

Partially because we worked this initial year with a select group of outstanding people, almost all involved in church ministry in some way, this first year succeeded beyond our wildest imaginings. Thirty-three people began and ended the retreat. All felt deeply moved and converted by the experience, and sixteen agreed to continue as directors the following year. Their directors felt that for each of these sixteen the experience of retreat offered a good prediction of their expected competence as directors themselves. We have had to develop more sophisticated discernment processes since then.

Our practice that first year and afterwards was not to pay much attention to the text of the *Exercises*, contrary to what perhaps many Jesuits experienced in their initial novitiate retreat. Most retreatants rarely, if ever, referred specifically to the text. Most would not have known that they were in a program unless we had told them so, and then they would have accepted this only on faith. They experienced the retreat. The text was used, as Ignatius seems to have intended, as a handbook for the director, not the retreatant. The directors led the exercitants from point to point, as they were ready. Some specific exposition of the key moments, "weeks," structural meditations, language of the *Exercises* was offered within the Saturday group sessions. Other than that, the retreatants, soon-to-be-directors, had no familiarity with the book of the *Exercises* while being led through the experience.

That year and in successive years, we ended the retreat the Saturday before Pentecost with a full day of prayer and reflection. On



this day we specifically recalled the movements—"weeks"—of what had been an experience. We began, in a sense, to invite reflection on the experience in a way that could be not just for themselves, but for others.

We encouraged the prospective directors to spend the summer months reflecting on their own experience and becoming familiar with the text of the *Exercises*, specifically, David Fleming's modern adaptation, with accompanying traditional text. Thomas Greene's *Vacation with God* (Ave Maria Press, 1986) is a simple, helpful companion to this prayer-study. Their task this summer was to get a feel for the theory and, more importantly, for how that theory had played itself out in their personal retreats.

In late summer we had one full day of study and reflection, followed by several shorter evening sessions in early September. Our aim in these sessions was modest. We wanted to give a good, thorough overview of each "week," with an awareness of the essential dynamic of the full retreat. We would move through each "week" with them during the retreat itself. We encouraged new directors to take at least two retreatants, so that they would get a hint of how diversely these overall themes are realized in separate, individual lives. With only one retreatant, a new director can too easily get worried about how things are supposed to happen.

We began the year 1984/85 with a core team of 5 experienced directors, 16 new directors, and about 50 retreatants. The core staff found this second year most arduous; for each of us had four or five new directors to supervise, one or two retreatants of our own, and continuing responsibility for planning the Saturday programs.

We continued to meet one evening a month with the new directors, guiding them through the various movements and nuances of the theory, following the same retreat format as we had the first year. We also met in smaller groups with supervisors and new directors, debriefing the actual direction sessions, suggesting methods to get at specific issues, offering help in finding applicable scripture passages, discerning where and how the structural meditations (the Kingdom, for example) might fit in with individual retreatants.

Though we have grown and expanded both in numbers and geography and made various adaptations and corrections, this basic retreat program has continued ever since. Each year retreatants and directors suggest participants for the following year. We have split into two groups, based in Seattle and Tacoma, and the retreatants come together only for the first and the final sessions. But the directors still meet together regularly, and the Saturday sessions remain essentially the same.

### III. THE PRESENT INCARNATION

#### Prenote

Though I have already gone on at some length describing our origins, the significant portion of this essay follows. I describe the program, "The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in Everyday Life," as it exists right now, because I firmly believe that this is something that almost every Jesuit could beneficially imitate in whatever apostolic mission he pursues. I further believe that this form of collaboration utilizes our best gift as Jesuits and will continually challenge us to be faithful to our own charism as we share it with others. This collaboration entails inviting others, God's people, not just as recipients of what we give, but as ministers with their own gifts.

#### Inviting Participants

In Appendix 1, I share with the reader the entire letter of invitation we send to prospective retreatants sometime in June. Let me just recall here that we solicit from both retreatants and directors names of those to be invited. Some names come also by word of mouth. We have found it necessary to ask for letters of recommendation from those whom we do not personally know. We ask that those who give us names of people to invite speak personally with them. We stress that those invited should be people with some prayer life already, not in the midst of some personal crisis that needs counseling/therapy

more than retreat, and with some sense of mission in the Church to the world.

The entire text of our letter of invitation can be found in Appendix 1.

## **Two Models**

As the letter of invitation indicates, our retreat program is now divided into two sections that (more or less) coalesce. The difference itself is illustrative, for either might form a model for some Jesuits to imitate.

The Seattle group is very widespread and more complex. The directors and retreatants are spread fairly evenly over the entire Seattle area. For the most part, the retreatants are not well-known to the directors as the program begins. Screening of candidates and pairing of retreatants with directors are much more difficult, taking more administrative time. We do presently have a coordinator who facilitates this administrative detail and acts as liaison for the support and ongoing education of directors. The registration fee of \$75 per person goes to providing her small stipend (about \$6,000), as well as to providing books, refreshments, and resources. The Seattle portion is a countywide, independent, constantly changing program, drawing its retreatants from several parishes, and even from other denominations.

The Tacoma group has largely been associated with Jesuit ministries in the area. Generally, we know the retreatants well before they begin and are already financially supporting them or being supported by them. We charge the people connected with one of these ministries only \$100 for the entire retreat. Directors connected with one of them draw no stipend.

Though some differences exist in other parts of the Tacoma branch, most notably at Olympia and Bremerton, this part of the retreat is primarily parish- and extended-community-based, almost an extension of the ministry already underway, and offers one option for suitable parishioners, staff, or board members. As a Jesuit I find it most exciting that our entire parish staff (presently nine persons) have made the Exercises, and that three lay staff members have been directors in



the program. Everyone here has extensive familiarity with the spirit and reality of our central Ignatian vision. The same can be said of every staff member at Nativity House for the past four years, and about most of the assistants and many board members of the Tacoma L'Arche community, where other Tacoma Jesuits work. There is a particular satisfaction in working with local Jesuits and thus having the Exercises so permeate our work.

It is satisfying in another way that the Seattle program exists and flourishes almost entirely independent of Jesuit involvement. Various Jesuits and lay people from Seattle University, Seattle Prep, and St. Joseph's Parish have at one time or another been involved; and the program is now headquartered at St. Joseph's Church. However, the retreat is essentially an independent lay movement in the area.

### **Faith Autobiography**

Returning to the letter of invitation, we offer two further comments. First, about the faith autobiography.

We ask each prospective retreatant to spend time during the summer developing a personal faith autobiography. We do this for several reasons.

First, this begins to focus prayer on the graced history of each person's life, invites him or her to do the seed work for beginning the retreat, and functions as a kind of pre-retreat "disposition day," recalling the history of God's love for and call of each retreatant.

Secondly, we encourage that this autobiography be done out of a spirit of prayer over several days or weeks, rather than all at once. This initiates a regular habit of prayer even before the retreat begins, if such has not been a consistent pattern. For those who do have a habit of regular prayer, the prayer begins to focus on the context and content of one's life, a very helpful prelude to the Exercises.

Third, and perhaps most functionally, these faith autobiographies enable us to see how ready the prospective candidates are to make a retreat, and to begin to consider the most apt director for those we know less well. Sometimes this biography surfaces items that invite us to personally interview the candidate, helping to discern whether this

is the proper time for such a retreat. We promise that these autobiographies will be read by at most two people. One of the core staff may read it if the person is otherwise unknown to us. Certainly, the director eventually utilizes this personal essay as a jumping-off point for initial conversations with the retreatant. It provides excellent material for the recollection of God's faithful love with which the Exercises usually begin.

### **Discernment Day**

The other item in the letter of invitation needing comment involves the purpose of an initial (pre)retreat day, the first Saturday. We developed this day after three years because it could help us and the retreatants to really consider the issue of readiness. We envision the day as a kind of orientation to the retreat, and also as the final step of discerning whether an individual is truly called to this experience at this time. The discernment, or orientation, day arose out of the recognition that some who entered the retreat simply did not take seriously enough the commitment called for. Gently but honestly we elaborate the components of the invitation.

If people cannot find the time for an hour of prayer each day (or at least five days out of seven), no matter how well-intentioned they are, the retreat will not work. We need to alleviate fears by nuancing a bit this "hour"; for it may come while jogging or eating a sack lunch at the office and it may not come in the first week or two; but the possibility must be there in order to go on. On this orientation day we also need to stress the importance of the Saturday meetings. Unless people can clear their calendars to make these sessions, allowing at most one exception, we discourage them from participating this year. The faith-sharing groups are particularly sensitive to irregularities in attendance at these gatherings. Later we will treat other significant features of the Saturday sessions.

To our surprise, the final critical area for discernment involved having the time and being available to meet with the director on a regular basis. Some people simply are not available on evenings or weekends, the only time most directors can meet with them. Retreat-



ants need to have some flexibility within their schedules to receive direction, which is at the heart of the experience.

Lesser items of this discernment day include making the financial arrangements clear, offering some brief introduction to the experience of the Exercises, and affording the opportunity for the more nervous would-be retreatants to have any questions answered.

### **The Selection of Directors**

At this discernment day we also begin to process what becomes a separate, critical topic, the matching of retreatants with directors. At this discernment day we give each retreatant a list of the directors, including some biographical data, some hints at the style of direction, some indication of interests in addition to this retreat involvement. In the course of this day, directors have at least some small part in presenting material, so that retreatants see them "in action." We encourage the retreatants to pray over their choice, invoking the Spirit's guidance in their decision. At the first formal retreat meeting the following Saturday, each retreatant is given a form with all the directors' names and is requested to choose three possible directors in order of preference. If they are so disposed, we invite them to indicate "indifferent" regarding their director, leaving the assignment to God (in the person of the core staff). Amazingly, to bolster your confidence and ours, we have always had the requests spread around sufficiently to enable us to give all the retreatants a director of their choice. Very rarely in the course of any year have we had to readjust a direction relationship. In fact each year in our evaluations most retreatants will say that the best part of the retreat (or one of the best) was the relationship they had with their director, voicing real gratitude for the ways God has blessed them through the one who walked with them.

Our initial retreat meeting includes a few moments for directors and retreatants to meet, set first appointments, exchange faith autobiographies, and prepare to start the retreat together.

## Individual Direction

In any good retreat, each person's experience is seen as unique. Though in a sense a process or program with common themes and movements, the Spiritual Exercises admits of tremendous individual adaptation. Much of the creativity of a specific director with an individual retreatant, common to the incredible experience of any retreat direction, lies beyond the scope of this essay. Still, a few words of procedure may be helpful.

We encourage directors to meet retreatants every two weeks for about an hour. Many retreatants meet more frequently in the beginning. Somewhat specific to the nineteenth-annotation retreat is the initial struggle to help people both find and utilize the time each day for prayer. Sometimes this takes a few weeks to establish. One important function of the director is to guide, encourage, even challenge the directee to be faithful to this commitment from the beginning; otherwise, the retreat experience simply doesn't happen. We have occasionally had to suggest to people that this simply was not the time for them to continue the retreat, because the pace of their lives did not allow them the prayer space to continue.

In contrast to what is usually done in a thirty-day retreat, our directors basically give enough material for "two days" at a time. These "days" will be spread over two weeks. In traditional language, this probably means about two scripture passages or two considerations with repetitions. To put it most simply, we tend to encourage retreatants to stay with what is fruitful or what proves difficult.

We begin with what, in the thirty-day-retreat setting, are called "disposition days," taking one or two direction sessions just to recall the presence of God in the life of the retreatant, looking at the material found in the faith autobiography, with appropriate scripture texts. We then move through each of the "weeks" of the Spiritual Exercises much as one would in a thirty-day retreat.

Two things somewhat specific to the nineteenth-annotation retreat affect the direction experience and invite comment.

First, this "retreat in everyday life" inevitably involves the events, struggles, joys of one's everyday life in one's prayer more immediately than would occur in a retreat apart. The consequences of this are difficult to spell out concretely because of the infinite variety of examples. However, the general reality remains constant: directors must concern themselves with life events as part of prayer much more than with simply what happened in the retreatant's "prayer time." The grace being sought at any moment of the retreat will as likely come while shopping in a supermarket or talking with one's children or wrestling with a problem at work, as it will during the sacred hour. Often the prayer hour becomes the time to name and own the grace experienced elsewhere. The director is constantly, if delightfully, challenged to be as sensitive to lived events as to experiences of prayer. Ideally and in the best Ignatian sense, contemplation and action become indistinguishable.

Secondly, we schedule the retreat to coincide with the liturgical year. This parallel provides both pluses and minuses. The support and flow of the liturgical year sometimes provide extraordinary advantages, undergirding and reinforcing one's prayer. Commonly, the retreatant considers the Kingdom meditation over the weekend of the Feast of Christ the King, or enters into the mystery of the Incarnation through the Advent and Christmas seasons. The Church's public prayer sustains and germinates personal prayer. When we end the retreat after the Lent/Easter season and celebrate Pentecost as our concluding experience, sending the retreatants into the world empowered by God's Spirit, the liturgical reinforcement is powerful and immediate.

The obvious disadvantage is that people do not move at the same rate in response to God's Spirit. Some find it extremely difficult to be wrestling with the mystery of personal sin and God's forgiveness while the Church is celebrating the birth of Jesus. Retreatants most often find the specificity of Holy Week awkward. It can be helpful to have the Sacred Triduum occur just as the exercitant enters into the paschal mysteries. But, in practice, the proper time for the confirming experience of the Third and Fourth Weeks arrives earlier or later than the calendar invites. Obviously the director faces the challenge both



to use and to let go of the Church's cycle while walking with a particular retreatant. Over the years we discover how to make the Passion a still-deeper look into the life of Christ. Perhaps the Passion becomes a way to pray over the Two Standards. One can return later to personally experience in prayer what the Church has already celebrated liturgically. Again, the infinite varieties of how this is worked out are too numerous to mention here. We do, however, need to recognize this interaction with the liturgy as an important factor to which our directors are attentive.

### The Saturday Sessions

Though they do not constitute a great deal of the time involved in the overall retreat experience, our Saturday group-retreat days provide important support for the rest of the retreat and act as catalysts during it. In Appendix 2, I offer the typical content of those Saturdays as we have most recently presented them. Such outlines may prove helpful to a group starting out. In fact, we keep changing the content of these days as we go along. Our theory regarding these days remains common, and I share that theory briefly here.

We believe that a sense of doing the retreat with a group, within community, enormously supports both the retreat and the reality of Christian life. The Second Vatican Council reminded us that "it has pleased God to save us, not as individuals, but as a people"; so the communal dimension of any Christian growth ought to be recognized. And, in fact, it helps.

Each of the Saturday sessions involves three parts: faith sharing, some exposition of material related to the Exercises, and liturgical celebration.

Throughout the retreat the same small faith-sharing groups (between five and seven members) remain constant. The first hour of our Saturdays generally includes a brief prayer time, recalling whatever movements are going on in individual retreatants, followed by the opportunity to speak aloud some of the fruits of this prayer.

We are convinced that almost as critical to growth in prayer as the experience of God is the ability to *own* that experience, *speak* it

aloud, in order to be able to *build* one's life upon it. It would have done the world or themselves little good if, after Mary, Abraham, Isaiah, and others had heard God, they had not trusted what they heard, said yes, and begun to act on it. This trusting one's experience of God frequently occurs because one speaks not just to one's director but to others, and, equally important, is able to hear the experiences—however halting and unclear—of others. Obviously, the intimacy of what is shared in such groups constitutes a large reason for our all but demanding that retreatants be present on these Saturdays.

We also offer some content on the themes of the Exercises. It is sometimes easier to give instructions to a group about some form of prayer, such as the use of the active imagination or the application of the senses, than for an individual director to do so with one retreatant. Something happens in a group experience of imaginative guided prayer that cannot occur as effectively alone.

One of the most thorny issues in any spiritual direction concerns the sense of social consciousness that is, or ought to be, part of everyone's relationship with God ("Action on behalf of justice is a constitutive dimension of the proclaiming of the Gospel"). Directors cannot and should not impose their own social concerns upon a directee. One may, in fact, left to oneself, pray for a long time without somehow sensing the implications of the Gospel as it affects a world larger than oneself or one's immediate surroundings. We have discovered that it is best and easiest to present some of the social dimension of the Gospel to the group as a whole, without implying that this should be part of any particular individual's personal prayer right now. It will be sometime. The group dimension allows us to plant a seed of concern for justice, for the preferential option for the poor, for a larger-than-personal dimension to prayer. Communal prayer with focused liturgical celebrations can serve to deepen this seed once it is planted. Quite often we discover a retreatant drawn in a new and fruitful direction as a result of such group presentations. Just as frequently, after experiencing such exposure, the retreatant easily moves back to more personal concerns that constitute his or her need at the time.

The Saturday sessions also allow us to talk about examination of consciousness, the Kingdom, sin, praying the Passion, and other things



in an "objective" fashion, allowing the individual retreatant and director to specify these as need be.

The liturgical celebrations on these Saturdays vary widely. Sometimes we celebrate the Eucharist; sometimes we create our own rituals to fit the season, the community, or the mood of the group. With regularity we have celebrated a Reconciliation Service somewhere around the end of the First Week, and a mini-Easter Vigil/Baptismal Renewal during the Easter Season. Again, if we believe that the Sacred Liturgy is that into which and out of which all Christian life flows, it seems critical that liturgical expression (even when it does not include Eucharistic celebration) be a part of the retreat.

Such is, in perhaps too much detail, the reality of "The Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life" as we are offering them. As you read, I would be amazed if questions and problems did not occur to you, just as we have experienced them; so I conclude the essay by sharing with you some questions still unresolved.

#### IV. SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

##### Masculine Images, Masculine Language

Certainly, I had already become aware of the problems of language and imagery in the text of *The Spiritual Exercises* while working with many women religious and some laywomen in eight- and thirty-day retreats. The problem grows more complicated as we work with a predominantly lay, very educated, very articulate group of women and sensitized men. I easily enough skirt around the language of sixteenth-century theology, and even somewhat automatically translate the images into more-contemporary terms. Many with whom we work are far less likely, able, or even willing to so ignore the sources of past and continued oppression. This is certainly one reason why we rarely refer specifically to the text of the *Exercises*, keeping the book itself, as Ignatius intended for quite other reasons, primarily as a tool for the director.

More important, we have spent many hours with the directors themselves trying to get beneath the text to the point that remains valid. I have especially learned to appreciate the Exercises at their core because the surface has been so extensively challenged. Examples of this abound; I can point out only a few.

The military language and imagery that permeate the text, especially in the Kingdom meditation and the Two Standards, prove all but totally inaccessible to feminist Christians (and many men). This recognition forces us to discover other, more creative ways to get at the seriousness of the individual call, or the radical choice between competing values, to recognize the demonic force that plays in the life of every human being.

"Riches, honor, and pride" are simply not the snares of most women, who, in fact, may need to assert some power over their lives, who tend to be much more tempted to excessive passivity and intent upon pleasing others at all cost. This radical insight, given from many women, has helped us to look much more individually at the attractions and addictions of unique retreatants, male or female.

The highly individualistic, "me and God/Jesus" tone of much of the text simply does not attract the feminine realization that we live and move and have our being in relationships, in community. Again, this recognition proves fruitful for all, demanding a very real change in how we exercise our direction. As a simple, frequent example, one does not fruitfully stress primarily or mainly an offense against God's law—or even God's love—to one who at this time is more able to see and repent sin as a profound failure in a personal relationship, or as the breakdown in a community that deeply matters to her.

Though we have consistently been challenged to deal with the variety of issues raised by this growing feminine consciousness, we cannot pretend to have solved them all. Still, the very effort to do so has brought me and many others closer to the best of Ignatian tradition. I will share just one somewhat-obvious example.

The Kingdom meditation, stripped of its warfare and battle imagery, becomes wonderfully enriched and enriching to both men and women. Divested of its individualistic approach and expanded to a communal, familial following of a wondrous personal lover, it

becomes richer still. The central question remains: How does Jesus Christ uniquely invite one, in community, to respond wholeheartedly? The image of battle worked for Ignatius. The question endures: What image grabs this individual at his or her core? What relationship most approximates in one's very real life the relationship that Ignatius embodied in the image of King? When we change the questions, we get a deeper, richer, more valid response. The challenge of holy women has helped us to so change our questions.

The issues involved here are admittedly enormous. Rather than develop them more fully here, I can simply refer the reader to an excellent recent book, *Women at the Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction* by Kathleen Fischer (Paulist Press, 1988).

### Selection and Support of Directors

The selection and support of directors obviously constitute a crunch point in this entire program. I must talk about our directors with some care, sharing my personal convictions and biases.

Our directors are generally over forty years old, involved for some time in other areas of church ministry, committed to personal prayer, personable, open to growth in themselves and others.

On the other hand, with few exceptions, they are not trained counselors or clinicians, nor are they experts in spiritual theology. One may wonder whether what these directors offer with only minimal, if first-hand, experience is, indeed, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Unlike Jesuits who spend their lives in the milieu of the Exercises, or those lay persons who spend a year or more in some specific training program, our directors have, initially at least, only their own retreat experience, some readings, a handful of training sessions, and some previous experience in spiritual direction in general. At the outset, I acknowledge, some may only be truly offering a good experience of spiritual direction, rooted in the Gospels—not a bad thing at all. As time goes on, experience grows, study continues, so does a feel for the Spiritual Exercises, the Ignatian genius. After six years, I would heartily maintain, most of our directors know the Spiritual Exercises from



the inside far better than most Jesuits who have only made and never directed the entire retreat.

Regarding the lack of training on the part of some in clinical skills, certainly the more counseling background, training, skill development one has, the better. It would be foolish not to acknowledge the damage that can be done by placing people with minimal training in such a sensitive, vulnerable, one-to-one relationship with others. People can be deeply hurt by bad advice and poor direction. I would go even further and say that people certainly are hurt by direction offered by friends, spouses, parents, and professionals.

On the other hand, "the greatest enemy of the good is the perfect." People are also greatly helped by talking with other people in all varieties of relationships. People can be demonstrably helped by having someone with whom to share their lives, their stories of faith. We believe and experience daily that people are much more likely than not to be helped in relationships with directors who are prayerful, open, friendly, and conscious of their limitations. They are helped by being part of a program that offers some movement forward, a sense of community and belonging larger than the individual director/directee relationship, a continual monitoring of and support for the directors, and a clear understanding fostered in retreatants that they have someone to appeal to if a particular relationship is not helpful.

So, while it would be unhelpful to minimize the perils involved in the program, it would be dishonest not to encourage its duplication. The gifts in prayer and in the direction of others so often possessed by the people we Jesuits work with every day are, we quickly discover, far greater, deeper, richer than we imagine until we set them free.

We have not stayed with the same directors throughout the history of the program; and I should end this section by acknowledging that each year some of our retreatants are obviously excellent candidates desirous of continuing to work with us as directors in the program. We have endeavored to incorporate two or three new directors each year. From time to time other experienced directors surface, either new to the area or newly interested in taking part. While we treasure this new blood, we have not settled on an ideal format for



fully embracing new collaborators into an ongoing program, though we can always use the new directors. We initially held monthly directors' meetings for ongoing study and formation in the spirit, dynamic, and particulars of the Exercises; but this no longer seems as essential for experienced directors, who now tend to focus on in-service evenings or workshops on particular topics of interest or concern, or else on parallel issues in which the directors feel a need to grow. As a result, we have had two or more persons on the core staff take on new directors in a form of internship, talking through their individual direction with them. Our efforts along this line are barely adequate, since most of our directors have other full-time jobs. We see no solution until we are able to fund a full-time person working with the overall program, of which this would be one dimension. We move slowly toward this goal.

### **Support for Directors**

Related to the above is our ongoing struggle with what kind of—and, more critically, how much—time to give to support for those directors who have been with us for two or more years. Originally, we met one evening a month with directors, all in a large group, discussing articles or a book (for example, *Spiritual Freedom* by John English, S.J.). The time required for this, as well as a growing diversity in individual needs, has rendered this inadequate. We have lost directors because the demands on the time of otherwise busy people became impossible. We know we need to grow, but have not discovered the best arrangements.

Our best success has come from encouraging (not demanding) that each director be a part of a peer-supervision group meeting with three or four other directors on a regular basis to pay attention to what is going on in the director as he or she works with retreatants. We have relied on the "Shalem Extension Program Peer Supervision Guidelines" from the Shalem Institute in Washington, D.C. (consult Appendix 3). This helped enormously in the personal development of directors. We plan next year to offer two longer in-service days by an "expert" on the Exercises to provide help toward growth in the con-

tent aspect of the retreat. While both of these directions (peer supervision and content development) are positive, we must admit that we have done something slightly different each year and have not yet settled on "the answer."

### **Finances**

As with every form of church ministry, finances continue to be an ongoing dilemma. We have tried to offer a \$200 stipend to directors for each retreatant (except for those engaged in ministries from which the retreatants come, like St. Leo's Parish; these work for free). If we consider the Saturday commitments, the directors' meetings, and the time spent with individual retreatants, each director gets about \$1.25 per hour. We have allocated \$6,000 to one individual who gives a quarter of his time to administering the program. Actually, it takes more time than this to do the job; furthermore, unless all pay what they are asked, we do not have the money left to pay this administrator. We hesitate to increase fees, lest we drive away prospective retreatants with limited funds. We are concerned to be available to those most committed to living a gospel of service, often the very ones with limited financial resources. Again, we have not solved this, but we intend this year to write some grant requests to foundations that help specifically religious groups, asking, in particular, that they offer scholarships for those unable to pay. We also make a plea for additional money from retreatants who could pay more. Next year we are inviting people to pay between \$300 and \$450, allowing them to discern what is most fair for them. We have also written to past retreatants, inviting them to help finance another to make the retreat; but this has met with only modest success.

### **Screening of Candidates**

As one would imagine, not everyone we have invited to the retreat has been an appropriate candidate. In honesty, the problems have been few, but still most troublesome. Some come with an abundance of issues best dealt with in a counseling arena. Once the retreat has begun, it is difficult to simply refer a person elsewhere without

giving the appearance of another rejection, thus reinforcing what is often part of the person's central problem.

We have tried a number of things to provide ever-more-adequate screening: individual conferences with those suggested, the faith autobiographies, the discernment days. But none work perfectly.

This year we are asking those whom none of the directors know well to send two letters of recommendation from people familiar with them. We have also tried Ignatius's maneuver adapted to our own circumstances. Ignatius insisted strongly that many good people will not go beyond the First Week. By making this criterion very public, we all but invite some people to drop out of the retreat as we get close to the Advent season, the end of the First Week.

Again, no approach works perfectly, and we have continued each year with one or two retreatants who have proved to be very difficult for the director and the small group with whom they were placed.

A side issue to this is the realization how precious is the "grace of the First Week." There are many people who do pray every day, who are eager to be part of the Saturday sessions, who are most regular in seeing their director, but who never do arrive at the basic Christian recognition that they are sinners loved by God. This is a great and mysterious grace. Though the Exercises work differently for a person who essentially stays in the First Week for the entire nine months, they may still constitute the greatest experience of his or her life. Retreatants who have not yet experienced this grace by May should quite properly still be praying for it; they will not perceive much growth of any kind until it is granted. We have discovered that each of the movements of the entire retreat can easily be adapted to the continual pursuance of this loved-sinner insight. Most of the directors feel deeply that, although at the end retreatants may not be able to say they made the Exercises, what they have experienced is more than worthwhile.



## Follow-up

One of the greatest problems experienced in the Church seems to be how best to follow up on what one has experienced. Cursillo, Renew, weekend retreats, and our own program can leave us feeling vaguely guilty because we cannot, or at least do not, afford adequate follow-up. We struggle with how to continue to relate to past retreatants on a continuing basis.

As mentioned, we do offer some direction for "next steps" (see Appendix 2, p. 40); but directors who take on two or three new people each year cannot easily stay with those from years past. We are grateful for a newly emerging Christian Life Community opportunity in our geographical area, but this will be applicable only for some.

Only with a full-time administrator could we manage to do the things that seem so necessary, such as offering follow-up evenings or days of retreat to those from previous years. Only then could we offer the support of ongoing gatherings of small faith-sharing groups made up of those who have shared a deep experience.

## CONCLUSION

So our work is not perfect. But it is very good. We began our training work with spiritual directors and this program, "The Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life," with the (for me, lifelong) motto "The greatest enemy of the good is the perfect." We believe that God is very available to us, and that whatever we can do to assist others to move in the direction of experiencing and accepting the love of this God is eminently worth doing, however imperfectly. And so I offer to you these reflections, sometimes too vague, often perhaps too detailed, because I am convinced that many other Jesuits, with the people of the Church alongside them, can make available our best and deepest grace, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. I will feel most rewarded in the effort of writing this piece for *Studies* if only in one or two places



some Jesuit is motivated to try to duplicate and, doubtless, go beyond what is spelled out here; or, perhaps, simply to give this form of retreat privately to one person and then to another. I promise prayers towards this end.

*Author's address:* St. Leo Rectory, 710 S. 13th St., Tacoma, WA 98405.

## APPENDIX 1

### *Letter of Invitation*

Dear Friend,

This letter is an invitation to join in "The Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life," an experience that will be greatly enriching to you.

Hopefully, someone has already mentioned this to you, for your name was given to us by one who has had this experience. We are presuming that your friend mentioned both his or her own enthusiasm and the commitment involved in being a part of the dynamic.

A word about the Spiritual Exercises. St. Ignatius really designed the experience that is the Exercises for a person who could get away from everyday life and spend thirty days, more or less, in quiet, solitary prayer. He realized, however, that for many people this was an impossibility. So, in the nineteenth Annotation, or prenote, introducing the Exercises, he suggests a method of making them "in everyday life." This retreat according to Annotation 19 is what we are offering to you.

As one "satisfied customer" writes:

The tremendous advantage of this retreat over any other I have seen or experienced is that it avoids the "coming home" syndrome. Know that one? You've spent a great couple of days away on a retreat with a very refreshing, inspiring, prayerful experience. Then, all at once . . . back to the routine, the business of life; . . . and things being as they are, the experience, resolutions, or decisions of the retreat fade into the distance. This type of retreat is different. I experienced God's presence in my everyday life in an active way—speaking through the sun and rain, through strangers that I met, through my family and friends, through my own feelings and thoughts.

Another retreatant shared the following reflection:

The retreat has been one of the most significant experiences. The opportunities for grace, transformation, and deepening continue to abound. I am so much more aware of and focused on God's love and compassion, the gift and blessing of my life, and the yearning of God's spirit within me to light my journey.

Annotation 19 retreats envision: (1) persons committing themselves to an hour of prayer every day, (2) individual retreat direction throughout the course of the Exercises, at least every two weeks, (3) a two-hour meeting with other retreatants once a month, and (4) the extension of these practices over an eight-month period.

For the total group meetings mentioned in (3) of the above paragraph, Seattle-area people will meet at St. Joseph's Parish Hall (732 18th East), and Tacoma-area people will gather at St. Leo's Rectory basement (710 S. 13th). This allows for easier travel and more interaction among retreatants. The entire group of retreatants from all areas will meet together only two times during the course of the experience, during the second and the last official gatherings. We are inviting you, then, to participate in "The Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life," a retreat extending from September 23, 1989, to May 19, 1990. Participation involves a serious commitment to:

1. One hour of prayer each day during the time period of the retreat.
2. Area gatherings (Seattle and Tacoma) once a month for two hours of input and sharing, followed by some liturgical expression.
3. Retreat direction every two weeks for approximately one hour. People giving direction come from Seattle, Bellevue, Bremerton, Federal Way, Tacoma, Olympia, etc.; so the meetings can be most likely arranged near you. You will have a chance to begin selecting the person you would like to have direct you at our orientation meeting on September 23.

As far as cost is concerned, we are asking that you pay a minimum fee of \$300 or as much as \$450 if possible, because this latter amount more accurately represents our costs. This includes a registration fee of \$75 that can be paid on orientation day, September 23. The balance can be spread out over the year. The process for registering for the retreat is as follows:

1. Fill out the enclosed application form and return it as soon as possible in the envelope provided, but no later than September 1. Receipt of this application will indicate to us your intention to



make the retreat, although there is no need for a final decision until September 23.

2. To help you with the reflective process, we are asking each participant to compose a three- to five-page faith autobiography, giving some indication of how God has acted in your life thus far, as you perceive it. This autobiography would include significant events, decisions, turning points, important persons, themes of your spirituality or factors contributing to it, as well as an indication of past spiritual guidance or retreat experience. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to do this, so be creative. Turn this in on orientation day, September 23, or prior to that if possible. The sooner the better!
3. Payment of a \$75 registration fee on September 23 will be required.
4. It may be that some of you will be contacted by one or another retreat director, to assure us that you understand this commitment and the processes involved, and to offer you the opportunity to have any personal questions dealt with.

Regarding couples, if you are married and only one of you is receiving this, we would like you to consider making this retreat along with your spouse, **BUT ONLY IF BOTH ARE READY FOR SUCH AN EXPERIENCE AND DESIROUS OF IT.** Couples from past years found the shared experience extremely enriching for both of them together and for each individually.

We are inviting more people to take part than we can actually manage, so the first to respond will be the first accepted. We heartily encourage you to bring your questions to the person who invited you to participate. He or she has comprehensive and immediate experience of the Exercises.

To sum all of this up, take time to pray about your decision, talk it over with the person who invited you to participate, and then send us your completed application as soon as possible. We will have separate orientation meetings in Tacoma and Seattle on September 23, 1989, and will give you further information on the Exercises themselves, the people directing the retreat, and the financial arrangements.



Dates for Seattle and Tacoma Sessions: all Saturday mornings. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

*Application  
for "the Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life"*

Name:	Phone:
Address:	

The following questions are a means of determining the best way we can help you move with some ease into and through the various periods of this year-long retreat. Only the core staff and the person you choose to direct you will review your application. Please fill this out and return it in the enclosed envelope as soon as possible, but no later than September 1.

1. What has been your past experience of spiritual direction (e.g., within a directed-retreat setting, ongoing direction, etc.)?
2. Describe your spirituality as you know it now (e.g., your present habit of prayer, the length of time you have been engaging in prayer, familiarity with Scripture, the active or quiet nature of your prayer, etc.).

3. Are there any special considerations in your life that might affect your retreat, factors that would not necessarily be obstacles to your retreat process, but could become so? For example, are you presently in psychological counseling or is there therapy in your history? is someone pressuring you to make this retreat? are you involved in any major family-life crisis, such as a divorce? can you really make the time commitment? and so forth.
  
4. What do you hope to gain from making this retreat?
  
5. In order to help us plan our 1989/90 budget, please indicate the amount of the retreat fee that you will be able to pay.

## APPENDIX 2

### *The Saturday Sessions*

For those who may want to begin a similar program, I offer an outline of the content for the sessions we held on Saturdays during our most recent retreat.

#### 1. Saturday in late September: "Discernment day"

The articulated purpose of this day is to help prospective retreatants discern whether or not this is truly an experience they seek, whether they can give time and energy to it at this time in their lives.

*Schedule:* (Different directors each make a brief presentation.)

*Opening prayer:* providing quiet and an atmosphere of retreat at the very outset.

*Overview of "The Exercises in Everyday Life"* by someone who made the retreat the previous year. Not intended to offer *the dynamic* of the retreat so much as to give the personal experiences of one retreatant.

*The discipline of the Exercises:* Spelling out what is asked of retreatants in terms of prayer time, writing reflections on that prayer, sharing with the director.

*Spiritual director:* God is the director, the individual discovers that direction; the director supports this discovery and guides it. What to look for in the director. Basic stance of trust in God. Prenote of the Exercises recommending that one place the best possible interpretation on the words of another.

*The faith autobiography:* Why we ask for it, how it will be used. Creative ways others may have done it.

*Financial responsibilities*

*Directors' biographical data:* To help retreatants choose directors at our next meeting, we introduce each director, give some biography,



say something about style of directing, apostolic background. This is also given in written form.

*Questions for small groups:* What excites you about this retreat?

What questions does this raise for you?

How do you feel as you listen to all this?

Questions shared in large group with brief discussion.

*Closing prayer*

## 2. Opening Session: First Saturday in October

*Opening prayer:* some form of guided contemplation, to offer experience of Ignatian prayer.

*Introduction of directors* again, to familiarize retreatants with options.

*Life of Ignatius:* Material from his autobiography to provide a context for the Exercises.

*Overview of the Exercises:* More formal than in the previous week. A look at each of the four weeks, grace of each week; stress on seeking spiritual freedom.

*Getting started in retreat:* Reflection on initial dispositions, openness to director, danger of trying too hard, letting God lead, staying with what is fruitful, no "right" or "wrong" way to pray, but a discovering of each person's own way.

*Choose directors:* Each retreatant lists her first, second, and third choices, or simply allows the team to choose for her. (Some directors have to sort these out.)

*Questions that have arisen from the morning*

*Lunch*

*Assignment of directors:* Retreatants take a few moments to meet with directors, turn in their faith autobiographies, and make the initial appointment.

*Closing prayer*

### 3. November Meeting

*Prayer:* Each session from now on begins with a prayer period, inviting reflection and leading into sharing sessions. This takes approximately twenty or thirty minutes. The following points are dealt with:

- In writing your faith biography, or praying over your faith journey, in prayer, or in conversations with your director so far in this retreat, what has struck you about your history? What have you remembered, touched again, savored? Where have you most known something of God's love for you?

*Faith-sharing groups:* A word about faith sharing. It is grateful listening, not discussing; everyone has the chance to speak, no one is forced. Groups are set up that will remain the same throughout the retreat. People are invited to respond to questions raised in the opening prayer at whatever level they find comfortable.

*Input on retreat material:* The First Principle and Foundation. About ten to fifteen minutes on the meat of this exercise. We try to make these presentations as "creative" as possible.

*Simple Eucharistic Liturgy:* Do a guided contemplation on some gospel scene during this Eucharist, as experience of Ignatian prayer.

### 4. December Meeting

*Opening prayer:* Each person is given a lump of clay. Sing together, "Abba, Father" as people begin to work with clay. Read Jer. 18, on God as potter. As they continue working, invite people to reflect:

- What shape is my life taking?
- What kind of earthenware jar am I?
- Who or what is shaping my life; i.e., who are my significant people, what are my key values?

- What is inside me, needing to be emptied so that something better can take its place?
- How do I experience longing to be filled with the goodness of the Potter, God?

*Faith-sharing groups:* Perhaps reflecting on the questions, perhaps sharing the clay we have formed.

*Consciousness examen:* We have given retreatants various forms of this exercise, encouraged the beginning of this practice as a daily part of the retreat, most likely at the opposite end of the day from when formal prayer usually takes place.

*Communal reconciliation service:* We have designed various services, but most commonly have used Mark 2, the cure of the paralytic, in a guided contemplation. Time for individuals to pray for healing. If enough priests are present, we have taken time for private absolution.

## 5. January Meeting

*Opening prayer:* Leading into questions for reflection as people enter into the Second Week of the Exercises:

- What aspect or quality of Jesus Christ most attracts, invites, or challenges me?
- What is emerging of Jesus in my prayer so far in retreat?

*Sharing groups*

*Justice dimension of prayer:* We have tried in various ways to suggest to the group as a whole that there is a societal (as well as a personal and interpersonal) dimension to prayer. We present some of the material on the Two Standards, the Three Degrees, and the Three Classes in this light. It has seemed good to invite this dimension of prayer without forcing it on any individual—simply to plant the seed.

*Liturgical prayer:* Focusing on this social dimension.



## 6. February Meeting

*Opening prayer:* Leading into sharing questions, geared to reflection on the issues people tend to deal with in mid-Second Week of the Exercises:

- What were your hopes, dreams, expectations in following Jesus as the retreat began? How have we wanted to “do things” for God? How have these expectations changed?

*Group sharing*

*Rules for Discernment of the Second Week:* Though we do not necessarily use the Ignatian language, we basically invite people to recognize the common phenomenon of the angel of darkness appearing under the guise of the angel of light. We consider ways we might be misled, taken off the track as we ponder the life of Jesus. Many do seem to experience a major distraction at this time. The very “spread out” nature of the nineteenth annotation retreat perhaps heightens this reality, as people more easily wander away from what had been emerging as a major direction for the retreat, instead pursuing tangents disconnected from the grace that was developing. We also reflect on the singularly Ignatian distinction between doing what God invites us to do, rather than what we have decided, what we want to do for God.

*Liturgical celebration:* Usually preparing for or recapturing the spirit of Ash Wednesday, as we move into or prepare for the coming of Lent, with its invitation to move more deeply into the mystery of Christ.

## 7. March Meeting

*Opening prayer:* Guided contemplation leading into reflection questions for sharing. Often we use the Agony in the Garden for this prayer.

Questions:

- To what do I feel invited to help heal the wounds in Christ's body now?
- As I move toward the Passion and Holy Week, how is the Passion of Jesus real to me now, as played out in the larger world, in my own circumstances, or in prayer?

*Sharing groups:*

*Input on praying the Passion:* Because this can be such a key time in the retreat, we have tried to make some brief points about praying the Passion. The Third Week, like the Fourth, is intended to "confirm" the directions of our prayer so far. The grace sought for is tears, interior pain, for Jesus and for myself, as I see how I have added to the Passion of my own large or small world. It is a common "trap" in praying the Passion to "feel bad with Jesus." The grace is rather to get up on the Cross and love the same way. Sometimes people experience extreme dryness and emptiness during this time, and feel guilty because the Passion "should be so fruitful." This experience *can* invite us to truly share in the Passion rather than just think about it.

*Communal prayer:* Often we invite people to pray over the Stations of the Cross in some contemporary fashion.

## 8. April Meeting

*Opening prayer:* Providing a guided contemplation on Luke 24, the disciples on the road to Emmaus, leading to the reflection questions:

- Where has Christ's victory been enfleshed in you?
- How has baptism been realized in you?
- What prayer experience recently makes the Resurrection a reality?

*Group sharing*

*Exposition of the Contemplatio ad Amorem:* Again, perhaps without the language of St. Ignatius, but encouraging the recognition of the diverse, incredible ways we have been loved through life and through this retreat time, with an emphasis on the Suscipe ("Take, Lord, and receive") as our response.

*Liturgy:* Focusing on the themes, signs, symbols of the Easter Vigil, with some renewal of our baptismal grace, baptismal promises.

## 9. Final Meeting, Held on the Saturday before Pentecost

**Note:** This day is a full day of retreat from 10:00–3:00 o'clock.

*Morning:* Reflection on the experience of retreat, using the Contemplatio as the framework for a prayerful review. Slowly, prayerfully, we take each of the four points of the Contemplatio, related to each of the four weeks of the Exercises. Someone offers a personal reflection of how this grace was given to him, invites the group to reflect for themselves. We end each point with singing a part of the "Take, Lord, and receive."

*Afternoon:*

a. *Private reflection* on two major fruits of the retreat experience. How has the retreat affected your overall life? choices made? prayer? new directions? We then have retreatants gather in the



groups they have met with all year to sum up the retreat and provide some closure to these groups.

*b. Looking ahead:* We offer some direction for people as they move out of the retreat. We offer prayer suggestions, also the possibility of joining a Christian Life Community. We have recommended Tom Hart's *Coming down the Mountain* (Paulist, 1988), a book precisely for those coming out of the retreat experience. We also recommend the five-volume series *Take and Receive* by Bergan and Schwann (St. Mary's Press, 1984–87), each volume of which considers one movement of the Exercises.

*c. Evaluation of the retreat experience:* We pass out forms inviting evaluation both of the retreat and the director. We invite people to pray over this and return it later.

*d. Suggestions of possible retreatants for the coming year:* We offer criteria for participants, inviting present retreatants to suggest future ones. We ask them to speak personally to anyone they recommend.

*e. Closing Eucharistic Liturgy with Pentecost theme.*

### APPENDIX 3

#### Shalem Extension Program in Spiritual Guidance *Peer Group Guidelines*

##### PURPOSE:

As an integral part of the Shalem Program in Spiritual Guidance, peer groups meet monthly, except during May-August when meetings are optional. To meet program requirements, the associate needs to have a minimum of 16 at-home groups during the course of the program, and to have been the presenter a minimum of FIVE times. We strongly recommend that you continue the group after completing the program as a way of providing ongoing supervision for one another in the ministry of spiritual guidance. The purpose of these meetings is to provide all group members with consistent ongoing support and feedback regarding your actual work in spiritual direction. You and the other members will present situations or vignettes from your relationships with directees, with the focus being on the presenter rather than on the directee, and the group will reflect prayerfully upon these presentations, expressing any feedback, affirmation, questions and insights that seem appropriate. The recommended schedule includes two presentation/discussion periods in each 2-hour monthly meeting.

##### GROUP ATMOSPHERE:

The most important thing to understand about the peer group is that it should be conducted with a prayerful, reverent, contemplative attitude. If group members are going to help one another be attentive to God in spiritual direction, they need to try to be attentive to God during the group meetings themselves. For this reason, care should be given to holding the group in a way and place that encourages an open, calm atmosphere, and the group should learn to pray together comfortably. Time will be needed for the members to become trusting of one another and to relax together. In a sense, the members of the

group should actually be spiritual friends to one another during the meetings, so it is helpful if everyone nurtures the same kind of attitude they would have in spiritual direction itself.

Specifically, this means that each member's attitude would be "contemplative"; a relaxed but very attentive listening to one another and to one's own inner responses, and looking for the presence of the Holy Spirit in what is happening moment-by-moment. Normally, this involves a willingness to refrain from leaping into the discussion with the first thing that comes to mind; to stand back a bit and try to sense and respond to the Spirit's movement, allowing responses to surface gently rather than grasping for them. Anything that the group finds helpful to this attitude should be encouraged. Ample time for prayer at the beginning is very important, and silent times of prayer during the discussion also help. Some groups find it important to hold their meetings in "holy space", have a candle lit, or use some other physical cues as reminders to be attentive to God's presence in the meetings.

During the meetings, this prayerful atmosphere and attentiveness to the Divine is likely to be disrupted by a number of things. It may be disrupted by self-consciousness, needs to appear competent or to get one's point across, fears of criticizing or of being criticized, needs to solve problems, analyze situations, or to gain approval or mastery. Such distractions are bound to occur from time to time, and it is unrealistic to expect to maintain a constant prayerful awareness or contemplative attitude in any setting. However, it is possible to keep reminding oneself of the priority of the Divine, and thus to call oneself "back" to this essential Center whenever attention has been taken away. It should be the responsibility of each group member to attend to his or her own awareness in this way, and also to keep noticing the overall atmosphere of the group to see if some correction might be needed.

For example, if it appears that the discussion has drifted too far into problem-solving, analytical "nit-picking", or "head-tripping", the first member to notice this should bring it to the group's attention. Perhaps she or he could say "I wonder if we're staying on target here—it seems to me that we're filling all the space with words", or "How do you sense the presence of the Lord in our discussion right now?",



or "Could we pause for a few moments of silence at this point?" Taking even a few seconds of prayer or simple silence in the midst of a group discussion can be a very effective way of re-centering everyone's attention. As in the case of spiritual direction itself, the silences and spaces in peer group meetings may well prove more helpful than all the words that are said.

In summary, it can be seen that the attitude encouraged in these group meetings is very different from that found in either psychological "case presentations" or theological "discussion groups". In such groups, emphasis is usually placed on psychological analysis, problem-solving, or intellectual understanding. Although a bit of this may legitimately occur from time to time in peer groups, the real goal for each member should be to gently try to hear and respond to God's presence, the movement of the Spirit within the meeting itself.

#### **CONTENT OF THE MEETINGS:**

Each meeting should be carefully centered around experiences and concerns relating specifically to the involvement of the presenter with her or his directee, and focused on HOW THE PRAYER EXPERIENCE AND FAITH LIFE OF THE PRESENTER IS IMPINGING UPON AND BEING AFFECTED BY THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DIRECTEE. Specifically, the group should try to keep the focus on the PRESENTER'S spiritual concerns, experiences, feelings, faith, blocks, blind spots, gifts, discernments, confidence and confusions in relation to the directee rather than on the struggles of the directee or "what to do in this kind of situation" or "how to solve the directee's problem". This focus will be assisted by the presenter asking the group for help with his or her own reflections about these specific spiritual concerns rather than seeking advice or suggestions. While there may be occasions where some kind of focus on the directee or some problem-solving is clearly called for, this should be kept to a minimum, and it should never be allowed to eclipse the focus on the spiritual awareness of the presenter. Nor should it distract the group from their immediate, moment-by-moment attentiveness to the Divine.

This will necessitate a carefully organized and planned presentation including ONLY enough information about the directee to provide an adequate understanding of the presenter's experience of the relationship. The best single guideline in preparing presentations is for the *presenter to plan to present HERSELF OR HIMSELF in relation to the directee, and NOT to present the directee as a "case"*. It is also recommended that the presenter develop some QUESTIONS for the group about the spiritual concerns mentioned above by stating specific issues about which feedback is desired. It should be understood that presentations do not need to contain "problems" to be solved. In a number of cases, the relationship may be going very well, and the required feedback may be nothing more than affirmation of and gratitude for this fact. On the other hand, if there do seem to be some problems or blocks they should be identified and confronted with as much candor as possible.

THE ANONYMITY OF THE DIRECTEE MUST BE PRESERVED AT ALL COSTS. To this end, presenters should change any possibly identifying data (name, occupation, location, etc.). Since the focus is on the presenter, it is not essential to know everything about the directee. On the other hand, if the presenter is specifically concerned about some attribute of the directee's life or situation, this should be presented accurately. For example, if a directee's age or marital situation seems to be especially relevant, other data such as vocation or location can be changed. ALWAYS use a fictitious name in the presentation.

The presentation can include a specific incident in a direction session, a description of the relationship as it has developed over time, a brief verbatim account of a moment that seemed especially graced or especially problematic, or a follow-up of a relationship that has been previously presented. It is up to the presenter to decide what material to present, and what form this should take. Again, this calls for careful, prayerful reflection ahead of time. It can be seen that this content differs from the "case conference" format with which many participants may be familiar. The subject of the presentation is the PRESENTER—and most specifically the SPIRITUAL LIFE of the presenter—rather than his or her directee.

The purpose of this format is two-fold. The first is to focus on the assumption that spiritual guidance is not a matter of finding the right technique to handle a given individual in a given situation. Instead, *it is a matter of clearing the blocks within the presenter so that he or she can be clearly and immediately present to the reality of the Holy Spirit*. Further, it is our assumption that within the peer group itself, as in spiritual direction, if the participants are openly and willingly attuned to the Spirit, any necessary help, learnings, and critique will be expressed. The second purpose of this format is to ensure the anonymity of the directee. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized. In contrast with psychological case presentations in which it is often felt necessary to know as much as possible about the "subject", here trust in the active and loving power of God must be radically greater, and the confidentiality of the direction relationship **MUST** be preserved. It is the responsibility of the presenter to preserve the anonymity of the directee, and it is the further responsibility of all group members to hold in confidence any sensitive material pertaining either to directees or other members that may emerge during the meetings.

#### ROLE OF CONVENORS:

Convenors and presenters should be scheduled on a rotational basis, with one convenor and two presenters for each meeting. Please do **NOT** attempt to use the same person as convenor and presenter. It is the responsibility of the convenor to open and close each meeting, to lead prayer time, to keep time carefully according to the agenda, to moderate the discussion as needed, and to attend to whether the discussion is following the intent, atmosphere and attitude described in these guidelines. (This latter is of course everyone's responsibility, but it helps to have the "leader" of each meeting be consciously attentive to this.) It is especially recommended that the convenor remind the group at the beginning of the meeting that the focus of both presentation and discussion should be more on the presenter than on the directee, and that the basic intent of the meeting is to be open and responsive to the Holy Spirit. The agenda for each group



meeting, to be monitored and time-allotted by the convenor, is as follows: (Convenors should have this schedule in front of them during meetings.)

1. OPENING: — BY CONVENOR (Including reminding group about the intended focus and attitude)
2. SILENCE: — WITH OR WITHOUT SCRIPTURE OR SPOKEN PRAYER — 5 MINUTES, LED BY CONVENOR
3. FIRST PRESENTATION — UP TO 15 MINUTES (Other members listen silently during the presentation.)
4. A FEW MOMENTS FOR QUESTIONS OF *CLARIFICATION* ONLY
5. SILENT PRAYER, REFLECTION AND WRITING — 2 TO 3 MINUTES
6. DISCUSSION — 35 MINUTES
7. BREAK — 5 MINUTES
8. SECOND PRESENTATION — UP TO 15 MINUTES
9. CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS
10. SILENT PRAYER, REFLECTION AND WRITING — 2 TO 3 MINUTES
11. DISCUSSION — 35 MINUTES
12. PROCESS OF MEETING — 5 MINUTES \*
13. SILENCE — 2 TO 5 MINUTES WITH OR WITHOUT SPOKEN PRAYER
14. CLOSE

\* Item #12, the "PROCESS OF MEETING" involves the convenor asking the group to reflect on the sense of prayerful presence within the group, noting what facilitated that or seemed to get in the way. Was there a sense of spiritual direction happening for the presenter in the group, from the standpoint of group members? Questions like these may be helpful for this discussion:

1. HOW WELL DID I/WE STAY FOCUSED ON THE PRESENTER? (as opposed to the directee)
2. ANY SPECIAL PLACES WHERE I/WE SEEMED TO BE "OFF TRACK"? (e.g. too much problem-solving, overly analytical, not attentive to the Spirit).
3. WHAT WAS THE QUALITY OF SILENCE, ATTENTION TO GOD IN THE GROUP?

The presenter might share his/her perceptions of the discussion—the sense of it as spiritual direction, including anything that seemed to be especially on target, a particular “nudge of grace” in the presence or words of others.

Notetaking on the process of the group and the strengths and weaknesses of self and other group members as directors can be helpful for the group’s self-reflection and as feedback to individuals for their reflection.

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## SOURCES

### *Nadal on Ignatius as the Pattern of Jesuit Life*

*In two vow-renovation talks to Jesuit scholastics in Rome, given less than six months after Ignatius' death, Jerome Nadal summarizes his often-expressed conviction that the Jesuit "way of proceeding" is rooted archetypally in the stages of Ignatius' own spiritual pilgrimage. (This important topic is developed by Richard W. Dunphy, S.J., in his *Placed with Jesus Bearing His Cross: A Study of Jesuit Identity in the Light of St. Ignatius Loyola's Life of Grace, as Based upon the First Jesuits' Understanding of Their Relationship to Their Founder* [Rome: Institutum Spiritualitatis Teresianum, 1983].) The text is translated by Martin Palmer, S.J., from *MONUMENTA HISTORICA SOCIETATIS JESU, Fontes Narrativi, II, 3-10*.*

*On January 2, 1557, Reverend Father Nadal gave an outstanding exhortation to the brethren of the College, more or less as follows:*

Our Reverend Father Vicar has commanded me to give you an informal exhortation about the spirit and work of our Society, into which the Lord Jesus in his mercy has deigned to bring us together. The purpose envisioned was so that, as the Constitutions prescribe, all here in the Roman College might renew their vows three or four times a year with greater profit.

You are already aware of how ill-suited I am for any responsibilities. Nevertheless, with God's grace I will make some practical remarks to help us all forward. I shall speak first about the state and grace of religious life in general, and then about the particular grace and institute of this holy Society of ours.

Our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ,

wishing to free the world from oppression by the devil, who offers as goals only wealth, prestige, luxury, and vanities, chose the exact opposite of these as the fundamental values of all who are to be saved, so that, by trampling all these things underfoot through observance of the commandments, all might be Christians. For this he has given a common grace to all, to enable all those who want to be Christians to keep God's commandments and attain the salvation of their souls. And this is the primary and common grace which we have in common with all Christians and for which we must always render profound thanks.

Besides this common grace, he also willed the existence of religious life for those who, by entering the path of the vows, would additionally observe the evangelical counsels and in this way strive for perfection. For the sake of this life, he conferred a

special gift and grace on the persons who founded such religious orders and on those who subsequently followed in the footsteps of these patriarchs. Thus, St. Benedict, St. Francis, St. Basil, St. Dominic, and the other founders of the various religious orders, having first been endowed by God with a special grace, proclaimed this life to others and with God's favor had numerous followers who were moved by their example and were themselves given a special help and grace for saying yes to this kind of life and for effectively living out its demands. For this special grace of the religious life is simply a particular impulse and help from God leading one to embrace and live out the requirements of this special kind of life—one which has been inspired by God and sanctioned by the Church.

Inasmuch as we too share in this special grace given to all religious, we should always render profound and unceasing praise to the Lord; moreover, we should show the deepest love to each member of every religious order, since, given our resistance to God, neither they nor we would ever have been capable of this unless the Lord had looked down upon us from heaven with special mercy.

However, to come to our topic of how our Society has received not only this grace which, though special, all religious share in common, but has also (like every other order) received a specific grace quite distinct from all the others, let us now look at a few points regarding our Reverend Father Ignatius and the

overall evolution of the Society.

First of all, this Society of ours is able to be counted in common with the other religious orders because (as we firmly believe) God originally inspired Reverend Father Ignatius and his first companions to form it; it was subsequently approved as such by the Apostolic See, and has enjoyed remarkable progress and growth in both numbers and spiritual effectiveness, steadily increasing in strength right up to the present moment.

Now just as other orders each have their specific grace, so ours too has a good many graces of its own. This is evident first of all in the Society's obedience, which requires not only outward execution and promptness of the will, but entire abnegation of the intellect, so as to judge even with our minds that whatever is commanded is the best thing. It is evident likewise in a kind of special power and grace for preaching, teaching, and similar activities—something which never ceases to amaze the most various persons and which we should receive with very special thankfulness.

At the time when Luther was already launching his heinous designs, our Reverend Father was a military commander, engaged in a noble-spirited quest for worldly honors (though he never killed anyone). But by God's will this path was closed to him when he was badly wounded in the legs and became dangerously ill. (This is a first grace—one which, like all the others, anyone who will make the compari-



son can verify in his own conversion as well.)

Next, he began to read spiritual books with eagerness and to experience strongly fluctuating impulses alternately towards worldly pursuits and towards the service of God. But there was a difference between them: the worldly thoughts always left him disturbed and profoundly sad, whereas the holy thoughts left him deeply consoled. Thus he proceeded from this point, through the discernment of spirits, to the utterly certain decision that it was better to serve God than the world. (This is a second spiritual grace.)

In the service of God, however, he took as his fundamental principle always to follow the course which would be more for God's honor and glory. (This is the sole foundation and rule, as it were, of the whole Society; it was the criterion used for the Constitutions and all the Society's activities, and the one always to be used in the future.)

Chiefly for the sake of God, then, he first decided he ought to practice extremely severe penance, and he pursued this severe penance by taking five disciplines each day, as well as by other exertions beyond human strength. These excesses would later lead him to that great moderation for his sons which we now find in our rules. (This is another grace.)

From here he was led next to a remarkable illumination of his mind, which now enabled him through the practice of prayer and spiritual contemplations to behold divine realities with more clarity than light itself.

Moreover, all this was amazingly intensified through his pilgrimage to Jerusalem and other religious exercises. However, among all his illuminations, he received an outstanding and supra-sensible one at Manresa, not far from Montserrat. It was to this illumination that our blessed Father used to attribute almost all his plans, even when governing the Society in Rome in the course of its constant daily expansion. (This is another grace.)

From this grace he arrived in turn at a desire and insatiable longing to help his neighbor, in eagerness to be of benefit not just to himself but also to others. (This is a fresh grace.)

But at this point, caught in uncertainty about how to carry out this resolve according to his principle of the greater glory of God, he could see the manifold dangers of error inherent in uneducated simplicity. Indeed, he was already experiencing imprisonments, persecutions, and suspicions for the activities which he undertook as best he could for the salvation of others. Certainly impelled by the Holy Spirit, he made up his mind that he needed to study and devote himself to the sacred disciplines for God's greater glory and the advantage of souls. (Here also we have a special grace of the Society.)

Therefore, being an unlearned man who knew no more than how to write, he began studying hard, first in Spain and later in Paris. But at this point the question arose whether he should undertake this great work alone or with compan-



ions. His decision was to procure companions, and he assembled nine of them. (This too is a special gift.)

But now there remained the question whether they should set up this group without approbation or as a religious order having the approval of the Apostolic See. With no disagreement whatever they opted for the latter. Hence, after extensive prayer and many deliberations this way and that, this Society of ours received initial and then repeated approval by the Apostolic See to be one of the religious orders of Christendom (even though the least of all) having its own adherents and the special graces of its own vocation and profession.

It was decided to admit into this Society professed fathers, spiritual coadjutors, temporal coadjutors, students, and novices. It was also decided to set up studies in such a way that the brothers would either live together but take all their classes from others, as is the case in many cities in Spain; or else themselves teach, as in Rome; or themselves also set up and run complete schools. (This too is a special grace of God.)

If we gather together all these elements, we will have not only cause for giving thanks to the Lord but also a pattern in our Reverend Father Ignatius for reproducing the genuine spirit of our Society—namely, by renouncing all worldly pursuits and placing God's service ahead of worldly concerns; by looking therein always towards whatever will be most for God's glory; by then doing penance; by engaging in spiri-

tual contemplations; by thirsting for our neighbors' salvation; by undertaking serious studies for the sake of this; by forming unbreakable bonds of love with our brothers; and finally, having placed all that is ours at the disposition of our superiors, Christ's vicars, by giving ceaseless thanks to the Lord for willing us to be members of this holy Society, and by our always making earnest efforts to walk worthily of our vocation even unto death, to the eternal praise and glory of him who is blessed forever and ever: Jesus Christ our Lord, our leader and standard-bearer. Amen.

*On January 4 he again gave the brothers in the College an altogether wonderful and stupendous exhortation, more or less as follows:*

We recently spoke about our Society's special principles and graces. Today, after reviewing these, I would like to make a few remarks about some other equally important graces of the Society, and also about its end, to help us know and have a sense of our genuine spirit, to God's greater glory.

We mentioned that our Reverend Father Ignatius progressed from severe penance to prayer and spiritual perceptions; this led him to a desire to help the neighbor, to do this through studies, and to do it not alone but with companions—all with the approbation of the Apostolic See in a society and religious order comprising professed members, spiritual and temporal coadjutors, students, and novices. He established that

there would be three kinds of students, so that there would be colleges where our men merely studied, others where they also taught, and others where they ran the entire school.

In this regard, note that our Society has a special grace of prayer, not therefore common to everyone, which I will treat some other time; also that it engages in prayer and spiritual enjoyment in such a way as to be immediately attracted thereby to an intense thirst for helping the neighbor—otherwise devotion without this desire would be dangerous in our Society, although good in itself.

Note likewise that our Father was especially moved in such a way that in helping his neighbor he was chiefly impelled to help those who could be his companions in this work, and who in turn would be able to assist others to their own salvation. This he in fact achieved by gaining companions who shared his desire; and this is something we too should earnestly imitate.

Finally, note how the decision on poverty and chastity was followed, through many consolations, by the decision for obedience in a religious order; and how our holy Father finally died, having brought to full completion the task assigned him by the Lord (our order having been confirmed before our Father's death by Paul III and subsequently extended step by step to a larger number of members and privileges). He had, moreover, also fully established the different classes of the Society's fu-

ture members and the different types of students and colleges.

Thus the course followed by a member of the Society follows that of our Father's life. Once a person has decided, either by way of the Exercises or by some other means, to accept a special grace from God and enter the Society, his period of probation would correspond to our Father's life when he did penance, devoted himself to contemplation, and imbibed a powerful longing to help his neighbor and to pursue studies. For it is after a person has been well exercised in these matters, according to his need, that he is eventually admitted to profession, becoming either a spiritual coadjutor or a professed, and then begins the actual and direct practice of the Society's work.

But after the completion of studies the Constitutions require that he first spend an entire year during which he begins to undergo probation all over again. Relatively free from the distraction of studies, he is to give a kind of final perfection to his penance, his prayer, and all his other previous exercises together. So much for the first spiritual principle; now let us say something about a few others.

When our holy Father, along with his companions, especially Reverend Father Favre and our excellent Vicar Laínez, was devoting himself to prayer at Rome with a view to the initial establishment of the Society, he had a remarkable intellectual vision in which God the Father was pointing out to him Jesus Christ

carrying the cross: placing him together with, and as it were assigning him to, the Lord Jesus thus laden with the cross, he was saying, "I will be favorable to you [pl]."

Reverend Father Laínez told me and others this story right at the beginning. When I—and Father Luis Gonçalves as well—sometimes questioned him about this, he never denied it, but, as if wishing to conceal out of humility, he would either remain silent or reply, "If Laínez says so, it may be," or the like.

But when we carefully went through his writings after his death, we came upon a passage where he wrote something like this about his consolations, the words bearing a resemblance to the vision: "... when God the Father was placing me with his Son." From all this I have become completely convinced of the matter and have always told and recounted it to others with the greatest consolation.

From this we gather that the foundation of our Society is Jesus Christ crucified, so that just as he redeemed the human race by the cross and daily suffers terrible afflictions and crosses in his mystical body, the Church, so a member of our Society should have no other goal than by following Christ through many persecutions to work for the salvation of souls along with Christ himself, inasmuch as these souls, redeemed by Christ's blood, are so wretchedly perishing.

From this principle which is Jesus Christ two others have followed. The first is our Society's being named the

Society of Jesus. For our Reverend Father proposed this on his own impulse to all his companions, earnestly pleading that before everything else, and without any constitution to that effect, our Society should be called the Society of Jesus. They all agreed. When others later suggested that a different name might be more advantageous on account of people who objected . . . [*the manuscript breaks off here*].



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor:

I have begun to read for the second time the 100th issue of *Studies*.

I cannot tell you how deeply moved I was during the first reading. There was great encouragement, an instilling of the desire for more prayer, and, to use an overworked word, great edification.

I am most grateful for all the work taken to produce this issue and of course for the sharing of my brothers. I am 52 years in this least Society and this issue of *Studies* goes high on my list of spiritual reading.

Again, my grateful appreciation for the effort of the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality. I won't say "Thank you" but "Do it again."

George B. Murphy, S.J.  
Huntington, N.Y.

Editor:

The testimony of the nine Jesuits with which you concluded number 21/2 (March 1989) of *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* saddened me.

What saddened me most was how each of these good and sincere men, unconsciously, was preventing the Father from rewarding those who would receive the poor disciples of Jesus who obey his missionary instructions: "You received without paying, give without pay. Take no gold, no silver, nor copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, nor

two tunics, nor sandals, nor a staff; for the laborer deserves his food." (Matt. 10:8b-10 RSV)

The conclusion of Jesus' missionary discourse in Matthew is not about his disciples who practice the radical poverty he demands but his promises how the Father will reward those who receive them because they need receiving:

"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. He who receives a prophet because he is a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and he who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." (Matt. 10:40-42 RSV)

I humbly thank Jesus for the truth of his instructions on poverty. I hope that truth will not be obscured by our love of the phrases "the preferential option for the poor" and "solidarity with the poor."

William J. Mountair, S.J.  
New York, NY

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